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UNCLAS HARARE 001150

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS AND AF/S RAYNOR

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT GOZ ACCUSES WEST OF BACKING MDC;
HARARE

Stung by a paralyzing five-day country-wide shut-down arranged by Zimbabwe's main opposition party - Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) - to register their displeasure at Mugabe's mismanagement of the country, Foreign Affairs Minister Stan Mudenge has spoken angrily to the Western governments accusing them of supporting "MDC's lawlessness and hooliganism" at the expense of government efforts to uphold the rule of law. Addressing diplomats in Harare on June 4, Mudenge is quoted as saying: "This is dangerous. If allowed to succeed it will lead to anarchy and chaos in this country. . .This exposes the hypocrisy and double standards of these external financiers and handlers of the MDC. . .But it becomes a crime when the government of Zimbabwe tries to enforce High Court rulings aimed at restraining forces hell-bent on removing a legitimately-elected government by violent means and in trying to make the country ungovernable. . .Tsvangirai is not above the law. . .No government deriving its mandate from the people would allow lawlessness to prevail. . .Let no one suffer from any illusion that the people of Zimbabwe as well as the forces of law and order will ever tolerate the removal of a legally elected government by force. That will not happen. . ." Mudenge's briefing to diplomats on the current situation in the country received extensive media play, especially in the government-controlled print and electronic media.

SULLIVAN